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ABSTRACT

One consequence of teaching British literature far away from British shores is the loss of intimacy that comes from a shared culture. American teachers can help bring Britain into their classrooms by requesting audiovisual aids from the various museums and galleries in Britain that are willing to supply material. Among such sources are (1) Walton Films (specializing in districts and cities in the British Isles); (2) Pictorial Colour Slides (archeological and historical subjects); (3) the Imperial War Museum (Britain's wars since 1914); (4) The Museum of London; (5) The National Portrait Gallery; (6) The Museum of Costume (late Elizabethan era to the present); (7) The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust; (8) The Royal Shakespeare Theatre Gallery; (9) Jane Austen's House; (10) The Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum; (11) Burns Cottage; (12) The Keats House; (13) The Bronte Parsonage; (14) The Dickens House Museum (London); and (15) The Dickens House Museum (Kent). Materials offered by these sources include slide sets, postcards, posters, cut-out models, publications, specific items, catalogs, cassettes, and brochures. (The paper also provides a description of each museum, a listing of materials available, and prices for some items.) (HOD)

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Diana Macintyre DeLuca

PROVIDING A BACKGROUND FOR BRITISH LITERATURE

One consequence of teaching British literature far away from British shores is the loss of intimacy that comes from a shared culture. Students have read about British things and seen something of the nation from J. Arthur Rank movies and the televised extravaganza that was the royal wedding, but the immediate cultural markers--everything from the thickness of the tea cups in British Railways waiting rooms to the heft of the coinage--can be only second hand. As literature teachers, we may well dream of teaching British literature courses as travel-abroad seminars and actually transport our students there, but the reality of co and time obviously prevent this. The next best solution is to bring Britain into American classrooms by means of various audio-visual media.

It is not my purpose to review the material readily available in the United States. Each of us has the copies of the many catalogs detailing the films, film strips, video-tapes, cassettes, and other kits available. Each of us is also aware of the Folger Shakespeare Library and the Metropolitan Museum, among others, which have valuable resources. I would like to spend some time, instead, describing a source of materials that is both excellent and inexpensive: the various museums and galleries in Great Britain itself. There are, of course, the great national museums, some of which are willing to deal internationally (the Victoria and Albert Museum responded, but the British Museum did not), but

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the most helpful sources are the smaller museums devoted to a specific author. Their letters of response sparkled with enthusiasm and helpfulness. I cannot claim that what follows is exhaustive, but it is a fair representation of the places willing to provide the material specified to trans-Atlantic customers. I can recommend the quality of the material, however.

A word about the British monetary and postal systems seems in order at this point. As of this writing, the British pound is worth approximately $1.86. When estimating price, I find it useful simply to double the British cost to obtain a rough equivalent in U.S. currency. Hence £2.50 is $5.00 U.S. Air mail from Britain costs £1.50 (approximately $3.00) per 100 grams and 15p (30¢) per 10 grams after; this takes about 7-10 days after the order is shipped. Surface mail is less, but it may take several months to arrive since it is at the mercy of the shipping lines. With the exceptions noted, all of the museums listed request that remittance be made by bank drafts in sterling. British banks charge for handling foreign-drawn checks, so it is best to write to the museum of interest to you, obtain their order forms, and follow their directions carefully. Those sources listed below have indicated their willingness to fill overseas orders. Prices were correct as of writing but may differ slightly.

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Walton Films
87 Richford Street
London W6 7HN England

Walton Films specializes in sets and individual slides of districts and cities in the British Isles. While they have some miscellaneous sets (for example, the Apollo Missions and sets

showing royalty and transport), the bulk of their offering is arranged county by county. There are a number of slides depicting the Lake district; these would be helpful for teaching Wordsworth and Coleridge. A comparable listing is available for Stratford-Upon-Avon, showing both the city as it is and the sites associated with Shakespeare. Walton offers over 100 sets of slides of Scotland, some of which would be helpful to those teaching Burns or Scott.

Since their order forms change, it is best to write for the latest lists and prices.

Pictorial Colour Slides
242 Langley Way
West Wickham, Kent, England

Pictorial Colour Slides aims to supply good quality slides of archeological and historical subjects at a reasonable price. They also see to underwrite "rescue-archeology" in Kent. The slide sets offered, as a consequence, are intended for serious study.

The slide kits vary in price from 60p for five slides to £4.80 for forty. The catalog is divided into the following sections, which provide an overview of the material available: Prehistoric Britain, Roman Britain, Saxon and Medieval Britain, Transport Through the Ages, Geology and Natural History, Famous Sites and Places in Britain, and Famous Sites and Places Abroad. A pamphlet listing the kits is sent upon request.

Imperial War Museum
Lambeth Road
London SE1 6HZ England

This museum memorializes Britain's wars since 1914. Displays

include aircraft, armored vehicles, guns and arms, uniforms, posters, and artwork. Their order form lists posters relating to the first and second wars (60p), handbooks of the museum (50p), records of oral history (£1.00-£3.40), slides of art work depicting various engagements (5p), postcards showing ships, tanks, aircraft (8p), and color postcards of British, French, and German uniforms (8p). These items would be of interest to those teaching Hardy, Brooke, Jarrell, Remarque and many others.

The museum indicates that payment should accompany the order, drawn in sterling on a British bank. They are, however, willing to send a pro-forma invoice totalling charges in advance, but no merchandise will be shipped until payment is received. There is an automatic additional charge of 40% (minimum 65p) for postage and handling; all orders are shipped sea mail.

The Museum of London
London Wall
London EC2Y 5HN

This is the newest major museum in London and celebrates the city itself. It was formed in 1975 by amalgamating the Guildhall Museum (1826) and the London Museum (1912). The exhibits are arranged in chronological order from the Thames in prehistory to the present day. Rooms have been created for each period, so browsing through the museum is like stepping into an earlier age. The room depicting Roman Britain, for example, even has a toy mouse on the floor and a half-eaten loaf of bread on the table. Those interested in the museum itself will find the excellent official guide well worth the 95p.

The museum offers a wide variety of potentially useful

material. There are posters ranging from 65p to 1.00 showing Roman mosaics, old maps of London, and various exhibitions; post-cards showing many individual items of display and scenes of London daily life. Those teaching Dickens' Great Expectations may be interested in the authentic cell from Newgate Prison and the prison doors. The museum also offers slide kits ranging from 80p to £2.55: these are Prehistoric, Roman, Saxon, and Norman, Medieval, Tudor and Early and Late Stuart. The slides depict artifacts, clothing, furniture, and domestic articles. Those interested in classroom displays may find the cut-out models of London and Tower Bridge £4.95, the Tower of London £2.50 and St. Paul's Cathedral (£1.75) helpful, but the museum warns that these are not suitable for children.

The National Portrait Gallery
St. Martin's Place
Trafalgar Square
London WC2H OHE

This gallery is the repository of paintings showing famous and infamous Britons. Here is the place to find excellent quality portraits of virtually every British writer, politician, military leader, philosopher, king, or performer, etc. The gallery offers three kinds of material: publications (including books, catalogs, prints), post cards, and slides.

Many public places in England have souvenir booklets published by Pitkin in full color. These reasonable booklets (25p each) are available from the gallery; titles are listed in the brochures that the gallery sends out. Generally, portraits are available either in post card or slide form, but the kits are

frequently worth the cost of purchase. Students enjoy the set depicting Henry VIII and his wives, for example, a useful aid for teaching More's Utopia.

The Museum of Costume
The Assembly Rooms
Bath, Somerset, England

The Museum of Costume, established in 1963 next to the Roman Baths, displays representative British clothing from the late Elizabethan era to the present. Some of the earliest exhibits are a dress of silver tissue (c.1660), clothing from the early 18th Century, and babies' clothes of the 17th and 18th Centuries. More than a museum, however, this is a center for the study of costume, and it includes a library with patterns, fashion plates, newspaper clippings, and shop catalogs.

They are prepared to ship books, including handbooks and dictionaries, histories of costume (one deals with the history of underclothes), period studies (one shows how Victorian ladies cleaned their clothes), specific items (e.g., a history of buttons), and needlework and embroidery. There is also a section of works about Jane Austen and that author's relations with Bath.

Their ordering system is unusual since they are willing to accept credit cards--American Express, Visa, Master Charge--.

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In addition to the general museums listed above, there are smaller collections associated with particular authors. The list presented here is not complete since some museums are too small to be able to deal with overseas customers. The list that follows,

however, is composed of those who have indicated their willingness.

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust
The Shakespeare Centre
Stratford-Upon-Avon, CV37 6QW
England

The Shakespeare Trust administers five buildings associated with Shakespeare and his family: the birthplace, Anne Hathaway's Cottage, Mary Arden's House, Hall's Croft, and New Place. The Trust maintains a bookshop which specializes in the sale of all kinds of publications relating to Shakespeare. They do not have a detailed catalog, although they will forward a mimeographed order sheet. They find that the following materials are most in demand: postcards of the interiors and exteriors of the buildings (6p each); cut-out models of the buildings ranging from 80p to £2.50; publications of such subjects as Shakespeare's birds (65p), flowers (65p), and Shakespeare country (95p); posters of various Shakespearean characters (75p); and slide kits £1.30.

The director suggests that for those with special needs, the bookshop will be happy to advise what is available. The order form cautions that payment should be in advance and in sterling, and there should be a £2.00 allowance for bank charges.

The Royal Shakespeare Theatre Gallery
Stratford-Upon-Avon
Warwickshire, CV37 6BB
England

This gallery contains paintings and designs connected with the performances of Shakespearean plays at the theater. Posters of the seasons 1965-83 are available for £2.50, programs for 45-75p. In addition, there are slides and cassettes of perfor-

mances. A set of six slides costs £2.65, the cassettes £6.00. Also offered is a fascinating collection of post cards showing the many actors and actresses who have taken Shakespearean roles (10p).

Since the bookstore at the theater offers many other items, those with special needs should write directly. This source is probably most useful for those concerned with Shakespearean production; others interested in Shakespeare the man and writer are probably better off with the book store at the birthplace.

Jane Austen's House
Chawton
Alton, Hampshire GU 34 1SD
England

This charming house was the home of the Austen family after they left Bath in 1809. It was acquired by the Jane Austen Memorial Trust and completely restored in 1948. It has been lovingly furnished with many personal items including a quilt that Jane, her sister Cassandra, and their mother worked. There is also a lock of Jane's hair and several of her gowns.

The bookstore indicates that it is willing to send postcards and leaflets (10p). There is no handling charge, and mailing would be approximately 40p. The cards show the house interiors, the Austen possessions, and the village of Chawton. The leaflets are primarily mimeographed sheets with information concerning the author's life and times. Since the material available is interesting but limited, this might be one of the times when risk is called for. To save time and charges, it might be worthwhile to obtain £3.00 in currency from an American bank, send it, and allow the curator to send you what she has available.

The Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum
Breadmarket Street
Lichfield
Staffordshire WS13 6LG
England

For those teaching Rasselas or Boswell's Life, the Johnson birthplace has much to offer. Johnson lived in the house from his birth in 1709 until 1731, when he and David Garrick left for London; the house, however, remained in Johnson's possession until his death in 1784. In 1900, Lichfield was allowed to purchase the house as a permanent memorial to the writer. It now houses relics, manuscripts, autographs, books and pictures, and furnishings associated with the family. Plans call for the birthplace to be expanded into a major center of Johnson study. At present, it also serves as the address of the separate Johnson Society which is open to "anyone who claims an interest in Johnson."

The museum offers postcards at 8p each; these show Johnson, Garrick, Boswell, Reynolds, Burney, Peel, Ashmole, Queen Anne, Siddons, Fox, and the birthplace itself. There are also leaflets at various prices: "Who Was Samuel Johnson" (4p); "Boswell and Johnson: The Story of a Friendship," (75p); "Literary Lichfield" and "Johnson's Lichfield" (each 20p). In addition, a number of souvenir items are available, ranging from note pads of the house (25p) to badges (15p).

Burns Cottage
Alloway
Ayr, Scotland

The Burns cottage is the thatched cottage in which Burns was born in 1759; there is a museum next to it which has some items suitable for shipment. The cottage has been restored carefully

and is much as it was during the poet's day; this may be seen in the set of three slides and postcards (£ 1.00). There are also brochures available of the life of the poet (£ 1.00 each), and the curator recommends a volume of Burns' poems (£ 5.95). If all the material is ordered, the cost would be £ 9.80 with airmail £ 6.00 extra and sea mail £ 2.00 extra. Since editions of Burns' poems are available in this country, the other items might be more useful.

The Burns' cottage is the starting point of a Burns Heritage Trail, established by the Scottish Tourist Board. Additional information may be obtained from "The Burns Heritage Trail" (British Heritage, December/January 1982/83, p. 72).

The Keats House
Wentworth Place
Keats Grove
Hampstead NW3 2RR
England

The Keats House is composed of two now-joined semi-detached houses (with a common garden) built in 1815-1816. Keats stayed here with his friend Charles Armitage Brown from 1818 until the final trip to Italy. The house, therefore, is the site of his most famous poetry and for his meeting with Fanny Brawne. The home became a memorial to the poet when it was bought by public subscription in 1920-21. Today it is furnished to correspond with the portraits of Keats, and it contains memorabilia of the Keats and Brawne families. For example, the engagement ring that Keats gave Fanny Brawne is on display, among much else. The library associated with the house has an extensive collection, including

microfilms of Keats' manuscripts and material at Harvard and in the Keats-Shelley Memorial House in Rome.

There are a number of items available for overseas mailing. Books and guides range from an illustrated guide to the house for 50p to critical studies of his poetry (many of which are better obtained from U.S. sources). Of most interest, perhaps, would be the set of nine slides which show the house itself and the various portraits of Keats. It is interesting to compare the Severn portrait of Keats working with the identical arrangement of the room today. Postcards are also available for 80p. In addition to the portraits of Keats and pictures of the house, the postcards show also the Grecian urn and Keats' gravestone in Rome. Those interested in ordering should obtain the sales list, inform the curator of what is required, and then submit payment in sterling after an invoice is received.

The Bronte Parsonage
Hawroth, Keighley
West Yorks, BD22 8DR
England

The Georgian parsonage has been furnished in the style contemporary with the family and contains personal memorabilia, along with a manuscript collection. The house itself and the surrounding area are described in a fully-illustrated booklet, "Bronte Parsonage Handbook," for 50p. In addition, there are 35 different postcards at 9p each, individual slides for 20p, and sets of three slides: A, showing the exterior, dining room, and parlour for 60p; B, showing Charlotte's room, her writing desk, and miniature writing for 60p.

The Dickens House Museum
48 Doughty Street
London WC1N 2LF

While Dickens and his family lived in this house only from 1837-39, it was here that he finished the Pickwick Papers and wrote Oliver Twist and Nicholas Nickleby. The house is furnished as in his day, but is notable mainly for the manuscripts, first editions, and much personal material: his family Bible, marriage license, and the reading desk he travelled with, among other things.

Postcards are available of the various rooms for 10p each, of Dickens himself (10-12p), and of illustrations for his books (12p). Slides of the house cost 26p each (eleven are available). Dickens' enduring popularity can be seen in the number of tourist sourvenirs available: everything from tea towels to a crest tie.

The shop manager requests that payment be made in international sterling money order, and she says that she will invoice once an order has been placed.

The Dickens House Museum
Victoria Parade
Broadstairs
Kent, England

This second museum devoted to Dickens manages to offer material quite distinct from its London counterpart. There is a booklet, "Our Watering Place," (75p) which describes Broadstairs as Dickens knew it in 1850; a quiz book on Dickens which, the curator says, "starts easy and works on up," (25p); and a times chart, a "very useful pictorial with works, lives, and characters, approx. 36x24" for £1.75. Other items available include postcards

of Dickens and the house and town (5-9p).

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As those who have visited the British Isles know, the country has many homes and sites with literary association. Because of the nation's taxation policy, many stately homes and historial places have been ceded to the nation or opened to the public. Often towns with a famous native, for example Lichfield for Johnson and Alloway for Burns, create historical trails of places associated with a writer. In this case, there will be a number of museums within a short radius. This kind of information can be obtained from writing the county council or the British Tourist Board in New York. For authors who have not been listed here, the interested reader may be well rewarded by writing to the town clerk of a particular locale. If there is no memorial museum, there may well be other places in the vicinty with ties to the writer. The best policy in the quest for reasonable and effective supplementary aids for the classroom is to write and see what happens.